

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 06547 201454Z
ACTION SS-25

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O R 201420Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3237
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
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AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
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USMISSION USUN NY

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 6547

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR MARR US LE IS PLO SY
SUBJ: DAYAN COMMENTS ON LEBANON: UNIFIL PROBLEMS

REFS: (A) BEIRUT 2784, (B) BEIRUT 2783, (C) TEL AVIV 5383,
(D) BEIRUT 2798

1. TOWARD THE END OF OUR MEETING ON MAY 19, FOREIGN
MINISTER DAYAN BROUGHT UP THE SUBJECT OF LEBANON. HE
STATED THAT THE GOI HAD RECEIVED INFORMATION THAT THE
PLO WAS PRESSING THE GOL TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE CONTINUING
VALIDITY OF THE CAIRO AND SHTAURA ACCORDS. DAYAN RECALLED
THAT DURING WALDHEIM'S RECENT TRIP TO THE AREA
HE HAD TOLD THE GOI THAT THE GOL CONSIDERS THE CAIRO
AGREEMENT TO BE NULL AND VOID (REF C). DAYAN HOPED THAT
THE USG SHARED THIS POSITION. I SAID THAT WE HAD NOT
ENDORSED THIS AGREEMENT IN THE PAST AND DID NOT INTEND

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 TEL AV 06547 201454Z

TO DO SO IN THE FUTURE. IN CONCLUDING OUR DISCUSSION
ON THIS SUBJECT, HE EMPHASIZED THAT ACCEPTANCE OF THESE
AGREEMENTS WOULD DESTROY THE WHOLE PURPOSE OF UNIFIL.

2. DAYAN'S COMMENT HIGHLIGHTS PROBLEM WE SEE WITH SOME
OF REFS B AND D, ESPECIALLY THE SUGGESTION THAT UNIFIL
BECOME THE IMPLEMENTOR OF THE CAIRO ACCORDS. AS WE READ

THAT AGREEMENT, NOT ONLY DOES IT SANCTION THE PLO PRESENCE IN LEBANON BUT IT ALSO AUTHORIZES PALESTINIAN ATTACKS UPON ISRAEL. AS PHRASED IN THE TEXT: "IT HAS BEEN AGREED TO FACILITATE FEDAYEEN ACTION THROUGH (INTER ALIA):

-- ASSISTING CROSSINGS BY THE FEDAYEEN AND FIXING THE POINTS FOR CROSSING AND OBSERVATION IN THE BORDER AREAS; AND
-- ORGANIZING THE ENTRY, EXIT AND MOVEMENT OF ARMED STRUGGLE ELEMENTS."

ALTHOUGH SOME MAY FEEL THAT IT IS POSSIBLE TO DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN A PERMISSIBLE ARMED PALESTINIAN PRESENCE IN THE SOUTH AND PALESTINIAN CROSS-BORDER OPERATIONS AGAINST ISRAEL, THE CAIRO AGREEMENT DOES NOT PROVIDE FOR THIS DISTINCTION NOR WILL THE PALESTINIANS ACCEPT IT.

3. IT MAY BE USEFUL TO PLACE UNIFIL'S CURRENT PROBLEMS IN THE CONTEXT OF OUR ORIGINAL RATIONALE FOR PLACING A UN PEACEKEEPING FORCE IN SOUTH LEBANON. UNIFIL WAS INTENDED TO FACILITATE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL; TO PREVENT THE RETURN OF ARMED PALESTINIANS TO THE AREA AND A RESUMPTION OF THE CYCLE OF PLO TERRORISM AND ISRAELI REPRISALS; AND TO ASSIST THE GOL TO REASSERT ITS AUTHORITY IN THE SOUTH. THERE WOULD BE FAR LESS LIKELIHOOD THAT WE CAN ACHIEVE TOTAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM THE SOUTH OR ACHIEVEMENT OF UNIFIL'S OTHER TWO OBJECTIVES IF UNIFIL'S
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 TEL AV 06547 201454Z

ROLE WERE TO BE IN ANY WAY BASED ON THE CAIRO ACCORDS. U.S. SUPPORT FOR SUCH A PROPOSAL WOULD OF COURSE HAVE A MAJOR IMPACT ON OUR RELATIONS WITH THE ISRAELIS. EQUALLY IMPORTANT, WE CANNOT SEE HOW U.S. INTERESTS WOULD BE SERVED SHOULD UNIFIL ALLOW THE PLO TO RETURN TO THE SOUTH OR SHOULD THE GOL CHANGE ITS VIEW THAT UNSC RESOLUTION 425 ABROGATES THE CAIRO AGREEMENTS--ADMITTING THAT INTERNAL GOL WEAKNESS MAY MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE TO TAKE THIS POSITION PUBLICLY.

4. UNIFIL'S CONTINUED DETERMINATION TO TRY TO KEEP ARMED PALESTINIANS FROM RETURNING TO SOUTH LEBANON IS A CRUCIAL COMPONENT OF THE OVERALL EFFORT TO ACHIEVE COMPLETE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL. THE PLO WILL HAVE TO BE CONVINCED TO AGREE TO THIS IMPLICITLY, IF NOT EXPLICITLY, AND PRESUMABLY CERTAIN KEY ARAB STATES WILL HAVE TO USE THEIR POLITICAL AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO ADD WEIGHT TO THE ARGUMENT. EVEN THEN, COMPLIANCE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY NOT BE COMPLETE, NOR UNIFIL'S TASK EASY. NEVERTHELESS THE ISRAELIS MUST REMAIN CONVINCED THAT UNIFIL IS DOING A GOOD ENOUGH JOB OF PREVENTING INFILTRATION SO THAT TOTAL WITHDRAWAL IS PREFERABLE TO THE VARIOUS COSTS

OF STAYING IN SOUTH LEBANON. AT THE MOMENT, THEY ARE TENDING TOWARD THAT VIEW. A SATISFACTORY IF TEMPORARY DE FACTO RESOLUTION OF THE ISSUES OF THE GOOD FENCE AND THE FUTURE OF THE CHRISTIANS AND SHIAS ALONG THE BORDER IS, OF COURSE, ALSO A FACTOR IN THEIR CALCULATIONS. SINCE THE GOL SEEMS A LONG AWAY FROM BEING ABLE TO REESTABLISH REAL AUTHORITY IN THE SOUTH, THE SPECTRE RAISED IN REF D IS NOT CURRENTLY RELEVANT.

5. OUR CONTINUING PRESSURE ON THE GOI TO SET A DATE FOR FINAL WITHDRAWAL WILL HELP SPEED UP THE PROCESS OF AN ISRAELI PULLOUT, BUT THE FACTORS MENTIONED ABOVE WILL BE THE FINAL DETERMINANTS. ALTHOUGH THE GOI DOES NOT WANT THE LEBANESE SITUATION TO DISINTEGRATE BECAUSE OF
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 TEL AV 06547 201454Z

THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM, ISRAEL WILL NOT AGREE TO A RETURN OF ARMED PALESTINIAN UNITS TO THE BORDER AREA-- EVEN IF THIS WERE THE ONLY WAY TO IMPROVE PROSPECTS FOR SURVIVAL OF THE GOL AND PERHAPS OF UNIFIL ITSELF. LEWIS

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